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WILD FLOWERS.

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These flow'rs I then, with spirit pure,
These lays, O Queen, I offer thee! —
Oh! guard my soul from glory's lure;
And to protect, be e'er with me!

In all my struggles with the world,
With fiends unseen, unfelt, though great,
With demon-spirits, thunder-hurled
From realms of light to darkest state;

In dreadful hours, when driven far
On stormy sea, for e'er, as now,
Be thou my safely-guiding Star;
My soul-protecting Shield, be thou!

BAYOU-LACOMBE, *Sept.* 21, 1818.

TO MY FRIEND ***

....But what is writ, is writ,—
Would it were worthier! but I am not now
That which I have been.—

(Byron.)

Oh! that I could your language write,
As you do mine,
In mystic, sacred words I might
My soul inshrine:

Again I might, in golden rhymes,
Let flow my thought ;
But I have been in distant climes,
And *there* forgot !

Oh ! that I could your language rule,
As I did once,
With graceful stress, as when at school,
Each word pronounce ;—

In hallowed songs of joy or gloom
Our souls would blend,
And ev'ry verse should spring and bloom,
At my command ;

But now, in vain, although to please.

Attention strives

To wake the words, like clust'ring bees,

In mem'ry's hives:

As when at school, I speak no more

Your mother tongue;

Nor can I sing a tuneful lore,

As once I sung!

New Orleans, Nov. 22, 1847.

THE WILD MUSE TO HER GRACEFUL SISTERS,

THE SACRED NINE.

O beata solitudo,
O sola beatitudo!
(C. Musius.)

My graceful sisters, list to me;

I come to crave for sympathy;

No flow'ry wreaths I ask of ye;

I ask no laurels ever-green ;

Ambitious never have I been :

A smile is all I hope to win !

Ye know me well, ye sisters mild :

Of pensive mood, and strangely wild,

As bashful as an Indian child,

I turn away from crowds with fright ;

I dread all public praise or light ;

In solitude I most delight....

My graceful sisters, list to me ;

A smile is all I ask of ye :

Grant but that smile, and blest I'll be !

Bayou-Lacombe, May 28, 1848.

TO MY HARP.

The harp, my sole remaining joy!
(WALTER-SCOTT.)

Awake, my harp; my sacred harp, awake!

Hush, sighing rushes, nightly whisp'ring reeds;

Hush, solemn murmur of majestic pines,

Lamenting breezes in the mossy oaks,

And on the shore the music of the waves;

Hush, restless watcher, moanful *whip-poor-will;*

All voices, loud and low, of nature, hush!

To greet my Muse in wild extatic joy;

To soothe with harmony my fev'rish pulse;

To let my feelings gush and flow in rhymes;

To spurn at earthly things, and soar on high,

In regions ever-pure of light and love;

To sing of Nature, God and Solitude;

The language of my native Land so dear,

The language once I spoke, an orphan boy

In old Kentucky, *dark and bloody ground,*

The language of my youth I must resume.

Awake, my harp; my sacred harp, awake!
Too long thy chords unstrung and moist have been,
Unstrung and moist with tears and fragrant dew.
Awake, awake, and sigh harmoniously;
In holy strains pour all thy sweetest notes;
As words heart-melting of a friendly voice,
On silv'ry sand as purling brooks unseen,
Or dying echoes in the distant pines,
Pour all thy melodies to charm my woes.
Awake, and sound to rouse my ling'ring soul,
My soul imprisoned in its carnal frame;
Imprisoned, yet, with hope and love sublime,
Aspiring still to wing an angel-flight!

And thou, O faithful Muse, arise and come!

Arise, and smiling wipe away my tears :

I feel so lonely, sick and sad, by all,

But God and thee, unknown and unconsoled !

Bayou-Lacombe, May 19, 1848.

TO MY MUSE.

—❧—

Oh! ever loving, lovely, and beloved!
(Byron.)

Crowned with a beaming diadem of stars,

In sweeping robe of snowy white attired,

And with a stainless lily in thy hand,

My Muse, my only friend, my vestal bride,

Art thou a child of Eve, of sinful flesh;

A vulgar, mortal-born and wedded child?

Not so! — Thou art a daughter noble, chaste;

A highly gifted child, of heav'nly birth;

A God-anointed, consecrated maid:

Thy thoughts, thy feelings, words, and all in thee,

Thy smile, all breathes a spirit most divine.

In the bright halo that surrounds thy head,

Genius and virtue blend their glorious rays; —

And as thou stately walkest, angel-like,

Arrayed in beauty and in holiness,

Thou leav'st behind thy steps a trail of light,

A stream of love celestial, and of bliss; —

And as thou comest on, my raptured soul

Thy coming greets, as that of spirits fair,

Of smiling messengers from worlds above,

Thy form is beauty ; harmony, thy voice ;

Thy mind, thy heart an everflowing spring,

A sacred fount of living waters deep,

Where, day and night, my soul may slake its thirst,

Its thirst of science, poetry and love . . .

Hail then, O chaste and noble offspring, hail !

Hail then, O daughter fair, O heav'n-born Muse,

O highly gifted maid, O mystic child

Of beauty, poetry and holiness ;

Hail then, my only friend, my virgin bride :

I bow and stoop in silence at thy feet,

Subdued and conquered by the awful spell

Of holiness and mild virginity ;

Unworthy most to greet, admire and praise.

I bow and stoop in silent humbleness.

Bayou-Lacombe, May 6, 1848.

THE NOOK.

L'humble coin qu'il me faut pour prier et chanter.
The humble nook where I may sing and pray.
(VICTOR LAPRADE.)

The nook ! O lovely spot of land,
Where I have built my cell ;
Where, with my Muse, my only friend,
In peacefulness I dwell.

The nook ! O verdant seat of bliss,
My shelter from the blast ;
Midst deserts, smiling *oasis*,
Where I may rest at last.

The nook ! O home of birds and flow'rs,
Where I may sing and pray ;
Where I may dream, in shady bow'rs,
So happy night and day.

The nook ! O sacred, deep retreat,
Where crowds may ne'er intrude ;
Where men with God and angels meet
In peaceful solitude ;

O paradise, where I have flown;

O woody, lovely spot,

Where I may live and die alone,

Forgetful and forgot!

Bayou-Lacombe, May 21, 1848.

MY DREAM.

Oh! that the desert were my dwelling-place!
(Byron.)

A roving child in solitude,
Alone with God alone,
I long to haunt the wildest wood,
By all but God unknown;

I long to dwell where lilies blow,

Where moans the *whip-poor-will ;*

Where silently my life should flow,

As flows the desert rill....

But 'tis a dream,—ideal dream !

As oft in legends told ;

Well, as it is, oh ! let it seem :—

Reality's so cold !

Bayou-Lacombe, July 8, 1848.

SYMPATHY.

—ꕥ—

Væ soli: wo to him that is alone!

(Eccles. 4. 10.)

Two souls by God united,
Oh! what and who can sever?
With blissful hope unblighted
They soar intwined for ever.

A. R.

All men are doomed in bitterness

To cross life's dreary wilderness;

But wo to him who fares alone:

He dies a most unhappy one!

To guide in life, assist, console,

Each spirit claims a sister-soul,

Congenial partner of its fate,

In desp'rate wo, or joy elate :

There is a link, 'bove nature wrought,

'Bove flesh and blood, a mystic knot,

By which two souls for ever join

In faith, in hope and love divine : —

Ah ! flesh and blood, say, what are they ?

All nature, what, but dust and clay ?

The only bond, which men, nor time,

Nor death dissolves, is love sublime ;

'Tis love through Mary's sacred heart,

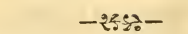
Where souls unite no more to part;

Unite in adamantine ties,

Eternally to sympathise!

Bayou-Lacombe, May 25, 1848.

VIRGINAL CHASTITY.



Prima Trias virgo est.
(St Greg. Naz.)

Tota pulchra es, amica mea ; et macula non est in te.

Thou art all fair, O my love, and there is not a spot in thee.

(Cant. of Cant. I. 7.)

O quam pulchra est casta generatio cum claritate.

O how beautiful is the chaste generation with glory !

(Wisdom. II.)

O maidenhood, O snowy chastity,

O thou, ethereal gem, angelic boon,

Whatever lustful men may say to soil,
Unfit thy purity to feel and praise ;
There is in thee a mild yet awful sway,
A heav'nly pow'r, a dignity supreme ;
In thee, there is a spirit and a spell,
A winning charm of seraph-gentleness :
Thou art the fairest, loveliest child of grace ! —
Tired in a royal, splendid robe of light,
The richest diadem on earth is thine !
Meek and serene, though stately in thy step,
So candid, smiling, graceful, yet so grave,
So fixed in duty, resolute and strong,
O'er hearts and minds thy sway is still divine !
Heav'n-born, in heav'n with comeliness to reign,
Eternal like the holy Three in One,

Thou claim'st the promised crown of martyrdom !
All weddings soon must cease with life and flesh :
Virginity unchangeable shall last;
Unchangeable throughout eternity !

O maidenhood, how great thy privilege,
The Lamb immaculate to follow close,
And new-framed anthems to his glory sing !
In dark antiquity, in ev'ry age,
How great thy privilege ; thy sway, how mild ! —
The pagan pontiff, prophetess and priest,
The sibyl, vestal and the sacred Nine,
All sainted bards were crowned with holy oak,
And all revered as virgins, or as chaste !

E'en now, how great thy privilege on earth ;
Thy sway o'er hearts, how awful, lovely, meek ;
Thyself, how praised, though yet unpraised as meet ;
Unpraised, unworshipped, followed but by few !

Virginity, how name thee, — nameless yet ? —
Thou art the mystic salt, the fragrant myrrh,
The precious balm, of sweet and heav'nly scent,
Whose virtues, from corruption guarding pure,
To flesh impart most glorious attributes !
By thee, frail man, exalted and transformed,
In youth for e'er renewed, and phenix-like,
Becomes a hero in his thoughts and deeds ;
Becomes an angel, and almost a god !

Thou art the source of all extatic joys ;

The spring of virtue, genius, holiness,

Of life and peace, — unutterable peace !

God's spirit, breathing love in solitude,

In solitude with stainless lilies pleased,

God's spirit, more familiar, speaks to thee,

And all his secrets to thy heart reveals !

O maidenhood, heroic chastity,

To vow, to consecrate and persevere,

Thou need'st an adamantine soul and will !

Like amber, unconsumed, but purified,

Or salamander-like, by fire unhurt,

Through fiimy flame thou passest white and safe ! —

All earthly, sensual joys, thou deem'dst too base ;
All lust, thy godly pleasure is to curb !
Subdued, proud nature cowereth at thy feet ;
And, though reluctantly, the worst admire ;
The flesh-fiends and the world, thy shameful foes,
All blush ; but fain in envy would defile, —
Thy fair renown with calumny would taint !

Bland spirit-child, who could thy worth extol,
Thy beauty, meekness, grace and pow'r divine ?
Who could, in strains sublime, and yet unsung,
With voice mellifluous, and heav'n-strung harp,
What muse, what angel could thy glory tell ?
What man, what hell-born fiend thy brightness cloud ?

The world, with sceptic smile, may speak and scoff;
The world, corrupt in thoughts, in words and deeds,
The world impure may speak to blemish thee:
But still thy name is bless'd by holiest men;
With rays undimmed, celestial, mystic-hued,
Still beams the glorious halo round thy head!
Angelic queen on earth, immortal bride,
Thy beauty far surpasseth all we view;
In nature there is nought so fair, so bright,
That may afford an image to display: —
Thou art what lilies seem in bloomy fields;
What seem, — O most unmeet comparisons! —
'Mongst noblest birds the eagle and the dove,
Stars in the skies, the snow on highest mounts,
The glitt'ring dew on desert flow'rs untouched,

Pearls in the deep, midst metals virgin gold ; —
Veiled in thy beauty, humble though a queen,
Thou art, among thy wedded rivals proud,
What sparkling diamonds seem midst lesser gems ; —
And e'en, — why not thy excellence proclaim ? —
Thou art above the angel, far above ;
For, wrapped in flesh, and lured by carnal lust,
On earth still tempted, and victorious still,
Thou stand'st upright, undaunted heroine !
By sin unstained, thou lead'st an angel's life,
Less happy, yet by virtue more than *he* ;
Yes, more than *he*, a spirit pure and safe,
From passions free, and settled now in bliss !

But, to thy growing fame, O chastity,

To thy unfading beauty, glory, worth,

To make thee known, and being known admired,

Though strained, and high-attuned each quiv'ring chord,

Great my attempt, as great as I am weak,

To thy renown, O spotless child of grace,

What have I sung, what may I sing again ?

My voice, how faint ; unechoed, all my notes ;

How scattered by the wind my leafless flow'rs ! —

Thy worth, all eloquence, all poetry,

All words exceeds !—Why then, why write and sing?--

I drop my pen ; — I cease to strike my harp ; —

With snowy lilies fraught to strew and deck,

I kneel in silence at thy sacred shrine ;

I kneel, and bow, and humbly worship thee ! —

Yes, though I cannot love, admire and praise,

As thou shouldst be ; though vain what I have sung,

What I may sing, — I'll strive to imitate ; —

A faithful worshipper, in mind and soul,

I'll follow thee on earth, in heav'n to meet,

In heav'n with thee eternally to reign !

Bayou-Lacombe. Sept. 28, 1848.

ENCOURAGEMENT.

. . . . . .

Be *resolute* and *calm.*
O fear not in a world like this,
And thou shalt know ere long,
Know how sublime a thing it is
To *suffer* and be *strong.*

(*Voices of the night*, F. W. LONGFELLOW.)

Among so many daughters chaste,

If there be one of God more blest,

A chosen one more saintly fair,

Oh! may this hymn encourage her!

"Arise, O noble child, arise;
By all thy deeds the world surprise;
All joys terrene with scorn reject:
Thy fate is that of an Elect!

Arise, O sacred bride, arise;
The world and worldly things despise;
Remember and fulfil thy vow:
A thorny crown awaits thee now!

Arise, O mystic dove, arise;
And freed by grace from carnal ties,
On wings seraphic, mount and soar
'Bove fleeting shadows evermore!

Arise, O sister fair, arise,

And tempt with me the higher skies;

Arise, for there is nought on earth

Can fill our souls, of heav'nly birth!

Arise, O angel-like, arise;

On earth, each blossom droops and dies;

All forms, all beings change and fade:

To cling to earth, thou wert not made!

Arise, O chosen one, arise,

And wing thy hopes to Paradise;

On high, in spheres serene of light,

On high, behold thy halo bright!"

Bayou-Lacombe, July 9, 1848.

PERSEVERANCE.

What thou art, thou art!
(Imit. of Christ.)
B. II. Ch. 7.

Though the strained mast should quiver as a reed,
And the rent canvass flutt'ring strew the gale,
Still must I on!.....
(Byron.)

Though cursed by all for virtue's sake,
My radiant sun;
Though stung by envy's hidden snake,
"*Still must I on!*"

Though charged with crimes by calumny,

Dark scorpion,

Of all that's pure foul enemy,

" *Still must I on!* "

In all my bitter woes and fears,

Though left alone,

And though my heart should steep in tears,

" *Still must I on!* "

Though blamed by those who should protect,

Approved by none,

In thorny paths, with the Elect,

" *Still must I on!* "

To persecute, though all agree,

Ah ! there is One,

A friend above, who cries to me :

" *Still must thou on !* "

Yes, though thy life in wo should end,

In wo begun,

To heav'n, thy realm, thy blissful Land,

" *Still must thou on !* "

Bayou-Lacombe, May 25, 1848.

THE WISE VIRGIN,

And one of the prudent ones.

Maria optimam partem elegit quæ non auferetur ab â.

Mary has chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.

(St-Luke, chap. 10, 42.)

Say, are they fled, for ever fled,

The golden days of St Ambrose ?

Where may I find a sainted maid,

A sister of our heav'nly Rose ?

If any where thou be, blest child,
Fair hidden one, where'er thou be,
However far thy desert wild,
This song of mine shall wend to thee :

"O child of Mary, humble bride
Of Mary's Son, O spotless dove,
While evil, sceptic men deride ;
While others doubt ;—believe and love !

The crown of virgins is thy crown ;
Thy vow, the most heroic vow ;
Thou art a wise and prudent one ;
A glorious light is round thy brow !

Arise, thy cross to take and bear;
With smiling lips and mind serene,
The thorny crown of Christ to wear;
Arise, and be a martyr-queen;

A martyr-virgin here below,
A queen in starry seats on high!
Oh! dwell midst thorns where lilies grow,
In solitude to love and sigh!

Let not the world thy heart beguile;
With eyes intent on Zion's height,
Behold thy happy sisters smile;
Behold, and upward bend thy flight!"

New Orleans. July 20. 1818.

TO MY FRIEND.....

THE WILD LILY AND THE PASSION-FLOWER.

—ꕥ—

Qui non accipit crucem suam, et sequitur me, not est me dignus.

He that taketh not up his cross, and followeth me, is not worthy of me.
(St. Matt. 10, 38.)

Sweet flow'r of light,

The queen of solitude,

The image bright

Of grace-born maidenhood,

Thou risest tall,

Midst struggling weeds that droop : —

Thy lieges all,

They humbly bow and stoop.....

Dark-coloured flow'r,

How solemn, awful, sad ! —

I feel thy pow'r,

O king, in purple clad !

With head recline,

Thou art the emblem dear

Of woes divine ;

The flow'r I most revere !....

The lily white,
The purple passion-flow'r,
Mount Thabor bright,
The gloomy Olive-bow'r,

Such is our life : —
Alternate joys and woes,
Short peace, long strife,
Few friends, and many foes !.....

My friend, away
All wailings here below :
The royal way
To realms above is wo !

To suffer much
Has been the fate of Saints ;
Our fate is such : —
Away, away all plaints !

BAYOU-LACOMBE, *Sept.* 24, 1848.

TO NATURE, MY MOTHER.

Dear Nature is the kindest mother still.
(Byron.)

O nature, pow'rful, smiling, calm,
To my unquiet heart,
Thy peace, distilling as a balm,
Thy mighty life impart.

O nature, mother still the same,
So lovely mild with me,
To live in peace, unsung by fame, —
Unchanged, I come to thee ;

I come to live as Saints have lived,
I fly where they have fled,
By men unholy never grieved,
In pray'r my tears to shed.

Alone with thee, from cities far,
Dissolved each earthly tie,
By some divine, magnetic star,
Attracted still on high,

Oh! that my heart, inhaling love
And life with ecstacy,
From this low world to worlds above,
Could rise exultingly!

Mandeville, July 28, 1848.

A SACRED THING IS POETRY!

Te decet hymnus, Deus in Sion.
(Ps. 64. 1.)

Ab Jove principium Musæ....
(Virgilius.)

O blessed boon of heaven,
Sweet poesy! impart
To me the skill that's given,
To touch the generous heart,—
Rich melody to pour
O'er bosoms that I love,
Awakening thoughts that soar
Earth's darker scenes above;
And when, life's struggles done,
My spirit-flight I wing,
Oh! be this favor won—
Thy strains in heaven to sing!
(Mrs. Anna Peyre Dinnies.)

In this cold, money-hearted age of prose,

So frowning stern, so hostile to the Muse,

Enrapt, my harp I seize again and strike,

To sing: *A sacred thing is poetry!*

From Orpheus' golden age of tuneful songs,

All voices, loud resounding, echo down,

To sing: *A sacred thing is poetry!*

The Muse, unfearing, by the altar stands;

And, priest-like, in the temple sings the bard:

A sacred thing is poetry! — Inspired,

The Church that godly language ever praised,

And ever deemed a most celestial gift;

With incense, myrrh and flow'rs, with offerings pure,

The faithful bard his song may offer too;

Immortal Lover of the Beautiful,

The Church has ever greeted with a smile

The child of song reclined upon his harp;

When all around was mould'ring into dust,
And hordes barbaric rushed from northern climes,
With treasures fraught, midst universal wreck,
Alone she stood, the refuge of the Arts!
'Tis known at last, while, in the Middle-Age,
While knowledge seemed in sable shroud involved,
And darkness brooded o'er the human race,
Through winding paths of labyrinths obscure,
To lead, as an eternal shining star,
Alone the guiding torch she held aloft!

A sacred thing is poetry! — Of old,
The bard was pontiff, prophet, judge or king:

The bard, in present days, is still the same;
The harp of David quivers in his hands!

O say, ye sainted bards of ancient times,
With priesthood crowned, and higher dignity;
With purple robes, and amethysts adorned;
Say then, ye followers of Homer's steps,
Who did with brightest flow'rs inwreathe the truth,
And pour in rhymes a stream of harmony;
Say then, immortal bishops, popes and priests,
Whose songs have echoed down from age to age,
With tuneful chords if God have gifted me,
If he have breathed his spirit through my soul,
And touched my lips with inspiration's flame,

Say, can it be that mute I should remain,
And on the willow must I hang my harp,
Beneath its mornuful leaves to sigh and weep ?
Oh ! no !—And far from cities, far from crowds,
From men perverse and persecuting still,
Compelled by this cold money-hearted age,
In some vast desert, wild, remote, I'll fly ;
And there, in freedom, peace and solitude,
I'll sing : *A sacred thing is poetry !*
And there, harmoniously attuned to mine,
Each voice of nature shall resound aloud,
To sing : *A sacred thing is poetry !*

Bayou-Lacombe, May 25, 1848.

AMERICA, MY COUNTRY!

Breathes there a man, with soul so dead,
Who never to himself hath said,
This is my own, my native land!
Whose heart has ne'er within him burned,
As home his footsteps he has turned,
From wandering on a foreign strand!
(W. Scott.)

Beneath the brazen sky of climes remote,

Where ev'ry sadd'ning thought with tears I wrote;

In all my roamings through each foreign land,

Without a mother's love, without a friend,

In exile-sorrows, bitter, deeply felt,

How oft my tearful, ling'ring eyes have dwelt

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Upon the setting sun, the glorious West,
O sweet AMERICA, my country blest!

Though past the sacred age of Prophets, Seers;
Though faint may fall and die upon all ears
Each song predictive and each mystic lay;
Though heedless all, I'll speak and prophesy!

America, — 'tis not a poet's dream,
A vain, delusive hope, as it may seem,
Of one who loves too much, to judge aright; —
America, thy stars are glory-bright!
Those stars I watch intent, and I rejoice!
With sight intuitive, prophetic voice,

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